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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND STATE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES
COOPERATING



STATES RELATIONS SERVICE
OFFICE OF EXTENSION WORK
WASHINGTON, D. C.

THIS LOOKS GOOD

WHAT'S THE USE OF REPORTING?

County agents are just now putting the finishing touches on their annual reports. It is "some job" to make a good annual report and perhaps every agent wonders at times if it is really worth while. What use is made of them anyway? Does any one ever really read them? Do they help any one? Are they just red tape? These are proper questions and particularly so from nearly one-fourth of the twelve hundred county agents in the Northern and Western States who will make their first annual report this year. We are answering these questions from the Federal angle. Here is what the Office of Extension Work of the Department of Agriculture does with them:

- (1) Every statistical report is tabulated and incorporated in State and National totals.
- (2) Every narrative report is read and indexed by standard subject headings. This index for 1920 comprises 237 single space typewritten pages on which the work of 1170 agents is classified under 408 different headings. The index shows at a glance the State, county and page of the county agent's report treating of any one of these lines of work. Some headings involve the work of only four or five agents; others more than 800. It requires the field men and a special force of twenty clerks six weeks to do this work. IT COULD BE DONE IN THREE WEEKS IF WE COULD RECEIVE EVERY REPORT NOT LATER THAN DECEMBER 10.
- (3) After reports are tabulated, summarized and indexed the following use is made of the material so prepared:
 - (a) It affords the basis of the annual report to the Secretary of Agriculture, due January 1.
 - (b) It is the basis of our annual printed circular-"Status and Results of County Agent Work" - manuscript due February 1, and the source of matter used by the Press service of the Department.
 - (c) It is of almost daily use in furnishing data to the Chief of the Office of Extension Work; Director of States Relations Service; Secretary of Agriculture, other bureaus of the Department and requests from other departments of the Government and from Senators and Congressmen who request information in regard to special subjects or special counties.

- (d) Officials engaged in agricultural research work within the Department are making increasing use of the county agents' reports now that the index makes them so easily examined. Several men spent from a week to three weeks reading the reports during the past year and making abstracts of special subjects in which they were interested. Cover crops, livestock shipping associations, farm management, cost accounting, boys' and girls' clubs, sheep extension work, red clover seed, septic tanks, and home water supply systems are some of the subjects investigated. Some of these investigators became so much interested in what they found that they asked for the reports for previous years as far back as 1915, all of which are indexed here. Following is what one of these investigators said about them:

"Recently I had occasion to go over some of your county agent annual reports in search of information relative to co-operative livestock shipping association developments. I was very much impressed with the file system you have for locating material easily and quickly. I believe if more people in the Department knew how easily they could get information from your files they would make extensive use of them.

(Signed) L. B. Burk,

Investigator of Marketing, Livestock and Meats"

- (e) They enable us to make briefs for the county agents requesting them on any subject covered by reports. This Service enables us to help You. It is our "come-back", an attempt to say thank-you by giving service rendered. As an example of this service, we helped the Arizona agents in their land clearing demonstrations by telling them how the county agents in Wisconsin carried on this work. "Ask and ye shall receive". But remember the quality of service we render in this connection is dependent on the quality of reports you send in ; for "with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again."

We are rather proud of the high mark for promptness which we were able to make last year. A national summary was available on January 12. We must beat that this year. IT ALL DEPENDS ON YOU! Finish your report NOW; send it QUICKLY to the State leader. Help make your State the first over the line this year with a complete set of reports. They are all due here December 19.

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